

The **AUTHOR & JOURNALIST**

OCTOBER
1926

Leading Editors Define
Requirements of Good Fiction

By David Raffelock

Meeting the Editors in Person

Harry E. Maule, A. H. Bittner, Anthony M. Rud

By Albert William Stone

Forms of the Drama

By R. Addison Adams

Plot Creation by the "Sink
or Swim" Method

By Willard E. Hawkins

The Literary Market

*Authentic Information on the Manuscript
Requirements of the Publishers*

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THE S. T. C. NEWS

A Page of Comment and Gossip About the
Simplified Training Course and Fiction
Writing Topics in General

VOL. III, No. 10

OCTOBER, 1926

EDITED BY DAVID RAFFELOCK

OPINIONS CONFLICT

The Nation Takes Issue With Konrad Bercovici on the Short-Story

"I believe the short-story to be the highest form of literary art," says Konrad Bercovici in his introduction to "Best Short Stories of the World," which he edited. "No other literary form," he continues, "exacts so much intense concentration on subject and form. No other form permits so little padding. The inner life of a short-story, the style, the value of the theme, and the construction of its characters must be of one piece with the directness and the straightness of the line running through it."

To which The Nation succinctly replies, "Piffle."

And this remark is amplified by the following: "The pedantic and esthetic claptrap about the short-story reaches its zenith of absurdity in Mr. Bercovici's dictum at a time when the average product in this medium sinks to the nadir of literary value. Popularity is the god of the short-story and great are his profits, but his prophets are only second best. Their efforts to indicate the forces or beliefs that might make the motives of this religion reputable invariably and ludicrously end in failure."

"The facts and reason why the American short-story is what it is—and it is significant that some of our best short-stories must be published abroad—are simple, obvious and commercial. Not the literary form, then, but the tabloid-minded reader, not esthetic integrity but the editor's blue-pencil exacts the swift scenario of sensational and sentimental incidents which constitutes the popular short-story whose 'intense concentration' Mr. Bercovici admires."

This interesting discussion simply serves to give additional proof that editors do demand a certain type of short-story and that there are definite editorial requirements which have to be met. While the situation undoubtedly is not the best for the finest creative writing, still it greatly simplifies the job for the writer who would make a living from his work, regardless of the literary ideals involved. And so, in spite of the fact that the "careless, mad wags" used to permit their subjects to determine the technique of the story, a standardized technique has great value in this highly systematized, conventionalized business of authorship.

Lew Sarett, poet and university professor, has quit metropolitan life for the woods. He can do better work away from the turmoil of metropolitan life, he says.

A Few Words of Gossip With the Editor

Do readers of the general newsstand magazines want the truth about life? This is a question that has been answered in various ways and still remains unanswered decisively. Recently the subject came up again when Collier's was criticised for rejecting a manuscript because it spoke too plainly about religion. Truth sometimes hurts, or at least offends, and as a result many magazines are not especially interested in the "unvarnished truth."

The same reticence obtains in the all-fiction magazines. A romantic or sentimental view of life is preferred by many to a more realistic presentation. Editors of some magazines want their heroes to appear as embodiments of manly strength without any blemish; heroines are to be paragons of virtue and loveliness. Whether or not there are people of this sort existing in real life makes no difference to these editors; they want such idealization regardless of its relation to truth.

Some editors go even further. In "holding up the mirror to life" they want every high public official reflected as being true to his country and his duty; every mother, noble and ready to sacrifice her life for her children; every preacher, spiritual, law-abiding and kind. Some of the magazines, and strangely enough, the he-man Western-story magazine among them, want no character in a story who swears. He may say "gosh," or "dern," or "counfound it," but more robust words are taboo. It is highly problematic if the characters often portrayed in such stories would in real life resort to such mild expletives, but the "truth" is not wanted.

Sex and love are to be handled with the softest of kid gloves. Love, in general fiction, is something that is noble and seraphic; sex is low, something to be looked at askance. The hero must not kiss his sweetheart until the last chapter or the last page; he must desire that consummation for page after page, but attain it only at the climax. Whether in real life a maid withholds her treasures for so long a time matters not. And fiction in this respect can hardly be taken as an improvement upon life! Surely, not to the man in love, at any rate.

Because of editors' demands regarding the interpretation of truth, some writers find it more advisable to go to the magazines for their conception of truth rather than to life itself. In this way there is less chance of offending editors and missing out on sales. "Learn what the editors want and give it to 'em," is at least a practical motto. And let "truth" take care of itself.

ALL SHOULD WRITE

Editorial in New York American Reveals Value of Literary Training

Everyone should write, urges an editorial recently printed in The New York American. It points out that proficiency in any endeavor is increased through the development of one's ability to express himself in writing. The practical value of forming interesting sentences, opinions of persons, scenes and what-not; the greater clarity and understanding that comes from putting down in words what one believes, leads to the development of one's abilities in general, increases his vocabulary and helps to form the virtuous habit of putting and getting in writing information regarding any important matter upon which a decision has to be made.

Many business and professional men have already realized the value of knowing how to write well. And those with initiative have taken steps to develop this faculty. A large number of doctors, lawyers, advertising men and salesmen have enrolled in the Simplified Training Course in Short-Story Writing because they realize that this method which trains the student to write through writing under professional and personal supervision is the most efficient and helpful method of learning to express themselves in words.

While the S. T. C. is designed definitely to give ambitious writers professional training in short-story writing, still the practice in self-expression is so thorough that even those who do not wish to write for a living have found its training invaluable. The assignments always are interesting and stimulating, calling forth the fullest play of the student's analytical, deductive and original powers.

It is interesting, and significant too, that housewives otherwise unoccupied and patients in sanitariums have found the S. T. C. the answer to a real want. Persons whose occupations or environment circumscribe their activities and limit their mental expression find in the Simplified Training Course practically all that they need to keep their minds alert and to develop their faculties of observation and understanding.

"I have learned to my sorrow," declares Sacha Guitry, the French actor-dramatist, "what translators do to one's work. I have seen my work butchered and have finally decided that my plays must be acted in French or not at all."

What are my books? My friends, my loves,
My Church, my tavern, and my
only wealth.—R. LeGallienne.

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THE EDITORIAL SYMPOSIUM compiled by Mr. Raffelock for this issue is, in our judgment, more than usually valuable and instructive. In addition to the many specific hints contained in the letters, there is an exceptionally significant attempt to give tangible expression to the intangible—to answer that most difficult of all questions, "What makes a story good?"

Writers in the earlier stages of their endeavor sometimes complain that the seemingly contradictory advice offered by various editors is bewildering. "One editor advises us to do this and that, another tells us not to do it; and the very things editors tell us not to do often appear in stories they publish in their magazines"—this is the frequent complaint. It is rarely heard from authors who are "making the grade." They know that the editors are not laying down rules, but preferences—that their suggestions are not to be taken too literally, but applied with judgment.

Moreover, as Mr. Raffelock suggests, there are no absolute standards of good. The editor who expresses the advice which most nearly coincides with the writer's own ideas, or which he can most readily understand, is the editor he should endeavor to please.

DECRY AS YOUNG AUTHORS WILL the preference of many national magazines for "big names," it should not be difficult to see the point of view of an editor confronted by this situation:

In many cases, it is pointed out, the advertisers and advertising agencies, instead of merely looking at the circulation figures of the magazines with which they contemplate placing their contracts, are wont to demand: "Who will write for your magazine next year?"

If the advertising representative is able to reel off a number of such names as Sinclair Lewis, Irvin S. Cobb, Fannie Hurst, and Mary Roberts

article about liquid air. It takes a wonderful mind Rinehart, the contract is placed. Naturally, it is up to the editor to see that manuscripts are secured from such authors, insuring from the advertiser's point of view that the magazine not only will be sold, but will be read.

This situation, however, applies chiefly to magazines carrying a large volume of advertising. The fact that an author has a "following" means much, of course, to every editor, but with the multiplicity of magazines now competing for the attention of the public, it is doubtful whether the opportunities for new authors who are equipped to tell a story were ever before as great as at present.

WERE IT NOT for our prejudice against publishing futile articles, we would be tempted to issue a "deadly paper-clip" number of *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*. The gleanings from one day's mail would furnish sufficient material for a symposium on the subject, though it would be necessary to expurgate the majority of communications before allowing them to appear in cold type. Apparently, if there is one thing arouses the ire of the average author more than anything else, it is the almost universal practice in editorial offices of damaging manuscripts by attaching the pages together with paper clips.

If we could correct the abuse by devoting an entire issue to the subject, we would consider that issue well justified. Unfortunately, protests, pleadings, and threats seem alike without avail to check the practice. We have known editors to promise that it would be abolished in their offices—for editors usually are or have been writers themselves and they know the annoyance of being compelled to retype a manuscript because its freshness has been destroyed by the devastating marks of the paper clip—but the next manuscript that comes back almost inevitably carries the usual disfiguring clump.

The difficulty lies in the fact that a constantly changing crew of stenographers, office boys, mail clerks and other assistants passes through the editorial offices. To these employees a manuscript is not the sacred thing it appears to the author. It is just a mass of papers which must be held together somehow—and the paper clip of commerce is the logical somehow.

We know writers who follow up each manuscript thus returned with indignant letters of protest, not only to the offending publications but to their favorite writers' journal. So far as we can see, their campaigns result in nothing more than a vast waste of energy. The only possible method of stopping the practice would be to pass a law prohibiting the sale, manufacture, or possession of paper clips—and even this, in all probability, would merely result in establishing a new type of bootlegger who would wax fat by smuggling an inferior and more deadly variety of the

contraband contraptions into the great publishing centers.

It does no good to yield to the inevitable by attaching a paper clip at the outset, in the hope that it will leave one mark and one mark only. The manuscript is sure to be returned by the next publication with a clip of altogether different shape attached to another portion of its upper hemisphere. Perhaps the best remedy—at least in case of manuscripts running into several pages—is to bind the pages in a regulation manuscript cover, using self-piercing paper fasteners to hold them in place. This, however, offers no very satisfactory solution to the scribe who submits jokes or poems on single sheets.

Second only in number of complaints to those about paper fasteners are the complaints that manuscripts are damaged by the use of time stamps on the first page, by editorial notations, or by refolding them into wrong-sized envelopes. Complaints to the publications which offend in these respects have been known to bring results. If the author encloses a self-addressed return envelope of the right size, instead of loose stamps, there is less likelihood that the returned manuscript will be mutilated by refolding it.

This faint attempt to express the horror and despair with which the paper clip is regarded by the writing fraternity may be read here and there by an editor who will try to institute a reform within his own jurisdiction. Perhaps if writers will clip out this page and mail it to offending editors with the comment, "My sentiments exactly," it will still further help.

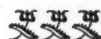
But personally, we haven't a modicum of faith that it will do any good. No person should contemplate entering a career of authorship unless, on searching his own soul, he is convinced that he possesses sufficient hardihood to withstand the crushing blow of having a beautifully typed yarn come back from its maiden trip tarnished beyond any repair short of retyping by that emissary of destruction, that invention of Satan, that cruel device more deadly even than the rejection slip, the wire paper clip.

A PUBLISHER OF HUMOROUS MAGAZINES writes: "We believe it would be a good thing if you ran an article more or less flaying the contributor who deliberately takes the contents of various foreign (especially British) publications and attempts to foist them on publishers as original material. We have received many such, some absolutely verbatim, and some with such slight changes that they are practically verbatim"

"PEOPLE, you will always notice, are only interested in those things they can understand. Make your newspaper or magazine easy to read, easy to understand—that's the answer to the publishing business." Cyrus H. K. Curtis, founder and head of the great Curtis Publishing Company, is thus quoted in an interview in *Editor & Publisher*.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

October, 1926



Leading Editors Define Requirements of Good Fiction

BY DAVID RAFFELock

MUNSTERBERG told in one of his books of half a dozen witnesses to an accident making widely different statements as to what they believed was the truth. One swore that the road where the accident occurred was dry; another declared that it was wet; other affirmations varied between these extremes.

The same psychological phenomenon obtains regarding editors' opinions of what constitutes a good short-story. A few will insist upon a hard-and-fast formula; others declare that no form whatever is necessary, that a story merely is good or it is not good. Other editors' opinions range all the way between these two poles. Truth being variable, and pretty largely the fabric of the majority, it becomes futile to insist upon determining an inexorable truth. What made a short-story good in Poe's day, may not make it good for the majority of editors today.

Realizing this, we may proceed to a consideration of editors' opinions without experiencing that baffled feeling which the literal-minded reader perhaps feels in trying to determine which soap is the best from reading the advertisements.

It is no more than fair to present at the outset the rather positive, if not literal, expression of Frank Crowninshield, editor of *Vanity Fair*: "I am no authority at all on short stories, as I know less about fiction than any living editor. Furthermore, we do not publish fiction in *Vanity Fair*."

Mr. Crowninshield, as well as the editors whose opinions are given in the following paragraphs, wrote their impressions of the

requirements of good short-stories in letters to be read to students attending THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST's first annual writers' colony and summer school, conducted this summer at Indian Hills, Colo. Each opinion is doubtless the sincere truth, for each expresses the conviction of the one giving it, and hence the truth for him. If authors are to be found who believe as this editor or that, then the individual truth becomes more extensive—and the wise author needs no other word to suggest to him which editor should receive his stories.

Harvey Deuell, executive editor of *Liberty*, expressed a general truth regarding fiction writing when, in his letter, he defined one of the essential qualities. The most mechanically-concocted plot-story or the most formless "literary" story gains through possessing this quality. Mr. Deuell's letter follows:

In a recent magazine discussion of good fiction, I read that a good story always exhibits the element of glamour. This is a passable definition—unless we attempt rigidly to specify what glamour means. I think the man who used it intended to employ it in its beguiling sense: to represent anything that seduces our attention. But this seduction brings us back to the proposition that a story should be "interesting," does it not?

Liberty desires stories which are addressed to a young audience; the narration would, preferably, be motivated by love. We prefer that the characters be Americans; that the time in which the story is laid be our own; that direct narration be employed; that the action be swift, engaging, and consecutive—without long lapses of time, which have to be designated either by stars or chapter headings—and that the setting be colorful.

Our preference is also for stories which do not exceed 5000 words.

Very frequently our magazine will exhibit violations of the requirements I have just defined; and the explanation is that a good story may yet be a good story without conforming precisely to this more or less rigid pattern.

We use very little fiction from inexperienced writers, because, to be acceptable, their work must measure up in every way to the quality of the best established authors.

I am aware that this assertion exposes us to the charge of being "prejudiced," "unsympathetic," "callous," and what-not. But whether the younger generation of writers like to believe it or not, there is a craftsmanship in the writing of fiction which—like the carpenters' trade—is only to be acquired by much practice. Very frequently a short-story, with a plot that fails to exhibit originality, is made more entertaining by the literary skill of the author than a highly unusual piece of fiction from the typewriter of a man who has not yet learned to fashion his materials in a competent manner.

Hewitt H. Howland, editor of *The Century Magazine*, has definite opinions of what makes a good short-story; however, his test of quality is a liberal one, founded not upon restrictions as to type, length, and the like, but upon less tangible though more keenly subtle considerations. His letter follows:

The first requirement of any story is that it shall hold the reader's interest to the end. As *The Century* prefers short short-stories, the factor that will most promptly win and hold the reader's interest is character. The second is reality, the third, originality; the fourth, pattern, and fifth, style. I am grading, you understand, only on the basis of the reader's interest. In any other rating, style, which includes, of course, ability to write clear, clean English, would come higher in the scale. The type of story, from the hard-boiled to sentimental, doesn't matter so much; any clean subject so it is well handled is acceptable to *The Century*. Naturally the reader's sympathy is a paramount thing, when it comes to enlisting interest; and indeed in building, from the editorial point of view, a "good story." Plot, in strict sense of the word, is very difficult to accomplish in a short story. If it can be added, then the author has achieved something worth while. A new device, a fresh twist, are highly desirable and may well serve in lieu of a plot.

Somewhat of a combination of the ideas expressed in the two letters quoted in the foregoing paragraphs is the opinion expressed by W. Adolphe Roberts, editor of *The American Parade*:

The main requirement of a good story is that it should present one or more real human beings; in other words, characterization is the thing. No matter what the plot-fiends may say, we must first discover an interesting personality on the printed page or it is of little profit to read further. Sympathetic or unsympathetic, virtuous or evil, an authentic character, created by a writer, will carry the reader along and make the latter desirous of learning what happens to him.

Second in importance is the plot or dramatic action of the story. Naturally, one prefers to follow an interesting character through a series of interesting adventures. But interesting adventures alone are sterile from a literary point of view, fit only for the cheapest ten and fifteen-cent magazines, which publish so-darn many stories that it would be unreasonable for their patrons to expect a live character in every one of them.

The third factor is the setting of the story, the "atmosphere," the mise-en-scene. A really great writer gives reality to the setting as inevitably as he makes his characters live and move and have their being.

The student must master all of these three points. Remember, however, that if he fails in the first he can never be an artist. The command of plot only will often lead to commercial success, but to nothing higher than that.

Not unexpected is the rather baffling, epigrammatical opinion expressed by H. L. Mencken, editor of *The American Mercury* in answer to the writer's question as to what constitutes a good story:

Your question, it seems to me, is unanswerable. Any story is a good story that is a good story. Rules in such matters are drawn up only by idiots.

I am sure that Mr. Mencken would modify his statement (if he ever engages in moderation) should he consider the definition of a good story not as a matter of laying down rules, but as stating what, for the particular individual at least, are the qualities in general fiction that most make stories seem worth-while, beautiful or distinctive. That, with modification, is what the other editors quoted have done, and that, in fact, is what H. L. Mencken himself has done these few months ago when in a syndicated article in *The Chicago Tribune* he said that "there must be rigid economy of attention; the interest must be concentrated upon one conflict, one idea, or one character. Secondly, there must be a clear statement of the theme at the start; the short-story writer, unlike the novelist, cannot waste time preparing his ground and spitting on his hands." Which, it seems to

me, is answering the unanswerable question and stating some positive rules, too.

Arthur T. Vance, editor of *Pictorial Review*, is neither timid, blustering nor diffident about dealing in certain liberal and intelligent generalities of interest to all experienced writers:

After all, the test of the short-story is that it interests the reader, but one reader likes one thing and another likes another thing, so how do the editors know? The answer to this is that they don't know for sure, but long practice gives them a pretty good sense of values, and, moreover, magazines are made up of stories of varying interest. We have love stories, humorous stories, adventure stories, and, of course, stories for a woman's magazine must have a woman interest—that is about all the restriction. We like all sorts of short-stories—love stories, action and adventure stories, domestic problems, etc.—in fact, any kind of short-story so long as it is interesting and clean.

Nowadays, few magazines have any hard and fast rules to follow and even if they have, when a particularly good story comes along that doesn't meet the rule, bang goes the rule.

New writers are always asking how long a short-story should be. I always reply by telling the anecdote of Abraham Lincoln when somebody asked him how long a man's legs should be, and he replied: "Long enough to reach the ground." So a short-story ought to be long enough, and no longer, than is necessary to tell the story.

There is a lot of talk about sex stories. This is a much abused word. Sex is all right in fiction, if it belongs there. In fact, you will find very few stories, past or present, that haven't got the sex element in them. Every love story deals with sex, as far as that goes, but sex is all wrong when it is just jammed in to make the story spicy. Make sure that it belongs or leave it alone.

Somebody will ask why one editor turns down a short-story and another editor buys it. That is just a difference of taste. Some people like roast beef and some people like breakfast food. Another reason why some stories are turned down is because the editor is overstocked with material of a similar nature. And it frequently happens that we will have to turn down a good serial because we have already planned our serial program and the story has to meet a certain date for book publication.

There never was a time when there were such opportunities for young writers. Here let me say a word about the superstition that young writers have no chance. That is a very foolish idea. There is not a magazine editor in the country who is not looking for new writers. It is a feather in our cap to discover a new writer. In the second place, we don't have to pay so much for a brand new writer as for one who has made a name. Remember, all the big names were little names once,

and they got to be big names through the merit of their work.

As to our present needs, we are looking for short, cheerful, quickly acting stories, preferably American in setting.

Maxwell Aley, fiction editor of *Woman's Home Companion*, whom I met some years ago in New York City and who knows how to talk about a good story as well as how to recognize one, explains in his letter something about the "highbrow" story, than which there is no more misunderstood type:

It is difficult to answer a letter such as yours because there is so little that one can state definitely about the needs of a magazine such as *The Woman's Home Companion*, or the type of story which we most wish to have. Perhaps I can best express it to your students by telling them that we think not of a *Companion* reader, but of the state of mind in which the two million people who buy the *Companion* every month either subscribe or purchase the magazine from the newsstand. We think of those people as wanting good fiction as judged by the more permanent standards; and this does not mean "highbrow" fiction in the sense of fiction that is pretentious and tiresome. It does mean fiction which reflects truly some basic thing of life itself. Sometimes the gayest, most inconsequential little story says something which is profoundly true. Whatever the story may be, we are after the story which, when the reader finishes it, leaves something with him. With this end in view, we avoid certain authors and certain kinds of stories; and I can only generalize here: the authors who are cheaply flippant or melodramatically untrue in their attitude toward life, or who have nothing to say and merely a surface technique; and the stories which to intelligent people are false, however interesting they may be to read.

Naturally, we try to maintain a high literary standard—the *Companion* has done that for something like fifty years; but mere literary standard is not enough. I think that we are most deeply interested in the things that lie behind a story and by that I suppose I mean the point of view of the author—what he really thinks about life.

Of course, we want a story to be a story and we demand that the people in it emerge as human beings and that the things they do grow out of themselves as the writer has made them known to us. Perhaps I may best illustrate our standard when I say that three serials run this year, Margaret Deland's "The Keys," Edna Ferber's "Show Boat," and Dorothy Canfield's "Her Son's Wife" were, from every standpoint, perfect *Woman's Home Companion* material. In the field of short-story, the cool, brittle work of Alice Duer Miller pleases both ourselves and our readers tremendously. Underneath Mrs. Miller's cleverness, however, is always something more—something which

I would define as the viewpoint of a highly civilized human being. Scott Fitzgerald also pleases our readers and ourselves and there again it is, I think, because he has something to say.

The country is full of writers who have a smattering of technique and who can use the English language after a fashion. There are few of them, however, who say anything, possibly because they have nothing to say. My own feeling as an editor, a writer and a lecturer on the short-story (New York University) is that the problem of the would-be writer is chiefly the problem of himself—of learning, of broadening, of tapping the deep, fundamental things which are the heritage of every individual. Dreiser and Sherwood Anderson have proved that it is often better to say something badly than to say nothing well, and now that Mr. Anderson has learned to say his something extraordinarily well, we have had him emerge as a really great figure of the American literary scene.

Ruth Stewart, managing editor of *People's Popular Monthly*, has in her letter, given a very intelligent analysis of the two general classifications of stories:

For the purpose, I think we might roughly divide short-stories into two classes—the Literary and the Manufactured. The former type may be identified with De Maupassant and the French school; it is also followed by many modern English writers and some Americans, among them Perceval Gibbon, Wilbur Daniel Steele, and authors who appear in such magazines as *Harper's*, *Scribner's* and *The Atlantic Monthly*. Such stories may be as short as 2500 words, or may reach 5000. Subtlety, shrewd insight or the unexpected ending, are frequently distinguishing characteristics. Such stories show high literary ability, but are usually salable to only the strictly literary magazines, and have slight chance with the big weeklies or woman's magazines. The case is, of course, different when the authors are such noted writers as Edna Ferber or Irvin S. Cobb.

The "manufactured" short-story, catering to popular taste, will find the largest variety of markets. This includes as ingredients the ideas of home, love, sacrifice, danger or adventure. It is built up and possibly long drawn out (though the younger writer cannot "get away" with this) to occupy the required number of columns in the popular journals with a large bulk of advertising. Built to order as it may be, the story must sound spontaneous and suitable for vast consumption.

We can't use padded stories in our magazine—but the subjects must be more or less with a popular appeal and written with literary skill. Stories of unusual plot which would please the average reader also are welcome.

Stories which most definitely fit into the

first of the two classifications given in the foregoing quotation, are those wanted by *The Dial*, according to Marianne Moore, editor. Miss Moore also elaborates upon the qualifications of the fiction coming under this general type:

Our requirements of content and of technique are equally rigorous. We are glad to consider for publication verse, fiction, and criticism—criticism of painting, music, sculpture, literature. We are in search of that which is highly thoughtful—which is "poetic" in the sense that it is fastidious. That which is merely informative or technically weak, we cannot publish.

With regard to the kind of stories *The Dial* wishes to publish, Scofield Thayer said in Jean Wick's "Stories Editors Buy and Why": "In deciding whether or not we accept for publication a story submitted to us we are guided almost wholly by the intensity of the impression made upon us by that story. Of course, the means by which the author attains this intensity are very varied and each manner of attack presupposes its own technique. But, of course, all stories, whatever their character, depend in part for their intensity upon the delicacy of the writer's perception of verbal values as well as upon the delicacy of perception of character and environment. And prose rhythms are quite as important as those of verse."

Stories that are considered good and that are wanted by *Collier's*, are somewhat between the two classifications, according to the requirements given by Grant Overton, editor, as follows:

Stories of 7000 words or less, with good story substance, and preferably at least one thoroughly well-done piece of characterization. Widest reader appeal. Unless humorous, stories should generally deal with something significant happening to somebody. In most cases, story is better to be constructed in scenes with little or no narrative writing, either direct narrative or narrator. Plenty of emotion. Only distinguished stories wanted. Using preponderately the work of established writers.

On the other hand, we have the frank admission of Miss Bina Flynn, editor of *Ranch Romances*, in her letter, stating that:

We are a great deal more interested in a good yarn, supported by an original plot, than we are in literary style.

Ranch Romances wishes to secure material dealing with the romantic West. We can use short-stories from five to ten thousand words, or long novels between thirty and thirty-five thousand words. The story must be a Western love story, the characters must be "real" people, and the story must not smack of the movies.

The requirements for *Triple-X* are equally rigid and definable. Jack Smalley, assistant managing editor, comes right to the point in his letter:

Ninety per cent of the manuscripts submitted to *Triple-X* are rejected for the reason that they are not intended for us, but for any general Western adventure magazine. We have very set requirements for our fiction and writers who intend to contribute are urged first to read a copy of the magazine and then write their stories, bearing in mind the quite obvious essentials as well as the taboos which the editors of *Triple-X* observe.

One instance of this lies in the requirements as to length. Stories between 6000 and 15,000 words are turned down unless they can be arranged to fall into either of these slots. Needless to say, the 15,000-word story is not a 6000-word story padded to meet a longer word length.

The next most frequent error is in the story having a saccharine plot. The story that hangs entirely upon a love theme is barred; even the fastest moving love story does not fit into *Triple-X* merely because it has plenty of action. These two stumbling blocks are the most frequently encountered and it is impossible to elaborate the hundreds of others. What we do want are stories that start out fast and keep going all through. There must be actual physical combat and the incidents must be probable rather than possible. The editors of *Triple-X* try to read every manuscript that comes in within two weeks and it is our custom to give a personal letter of criticism whenever the case warrants.

We are, contrary to the general opinion of editors, always eager to help a writer get his story across, for good stories are few and far between.

Douglas M. Dold, editor of *The Danger Trail*, reveals in his letter that stories he wants come under Miss Stewart's second classification. Specifically his idea of a good story, and especially a good story for his magazine, is as follows:

It seems to us that the sum total of any good fiction, particularly of the adventure type, is to create and hold an illusion. Above all, the story must be convincing, and this necessitates accuracy of plot, of characterization and of setting.

The Danger Trail wishes such stories. We have a slight preference for stories told in the first person, but when the plot will not allow this treatment we find no fault with the third person. We do not use any stories in which there is a woman lead. At the present time we are not publishing any period stories set further back than sixty to seventy years. We use no supernatural or fantasy stories, and like straight adventure in which as much character work as possible is shown

through the medium of physical action. We rather like our stories to contain a love interest, but this should not dominate the adventure element. We use serials of from fifty to seventy-five thousand words; novelettes of approximately twenty to thirty thousand words; short-stories not to exceed ten thousand words. Any short-stories sent us will receive a sympathetic, prompt reading. At present we are anxious to buy the shorter length stories. We are not interested in the sex or psychological story.

We use articles dealing with travel and exploration in the out-of-the-way corners of the world. We use no material in which the action takes place in the United States, the more civilized portions of Canada, in England or Europe in general, although a story set in Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, certain parts of Spain, Crete, Sardinia, Corsica or Greece would prove interesting to us.

Portions of the world particularly interesting to us and in which we would like stories to be set are:

Madagascar, Papua, New Britain, New Hebrides, Solomon Group, Spitzbergen, Iceland, Greenland, Northern Siberia, Polar, and either Antarctic or Arctic would be interesting. We like good desert stories, Arabia, Sahara, the Gobi and the regions of southern China. Stories of Manchuria, Lapland, Persia, the Caspian and Black Sea regions, Sumatra, the Celebes, Borneo, the Shan States, Burma, Siam and Java. We like good sea stories and stories of adventure with queer professions or trades, for instance: the tree explorer, or man who discovers new forms of trees for strictly monetary reasons; Northern Australia and the great Gulf of Carpenteria; stories of Yucatan, Central America, the Columbian "Choko," Venezuela and the Guianas; Brazil and the other South American countries; the Low Island and stories set in the little known islands of South and North Pacific, African stories, particularly those laid in the wilder and less known regions, such as the Kivu region, the Cameruns, the island of Fernando Po, the upper Niger, the upper and middle Zambezi and the great Kalahari Desert.

We give this long list of desirable localities in the hope that it will serve as a suggestion to writers of adventure fiction. Many good stories are written by men who have never even visited the locality written on.

Finally, let me say that, when possible, we will be glad to help the writer with any suggestions that may aid him with his story.

WRITERS can learn much from reading and studying these letters. They at least contain something definite with which to gauge certain editors' conceptions of good stories, and if the writer should have a story which demonstrates some editor's definition

of a good story, then he can submit it to that editor with some assurance that it will bring back a check.

The letters reveal that editors, as a rule, are interested in the work of new writers. The editors apparently were pleased to address students of THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST's colony and many of them stated definitely that they welcomed the work

of new writers, for example, Robert E. MacAlarney, managing editor of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, who wrote: "We are looking for effective, human material—and everyone has an even chance." Thomas B. Wells, editor of *Harper's Magazine*, wrote, "I sincerely hope that you are producing some young writers whose work may some time come to us."



The Rejection Slip

By JOSEPH E. DEUPREE

I FIND the game of collecting rejection slips almost as interesting as collecting canceled stamps and gum wrappers. I need one of THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST's to complete a quilt and will esteem the same second only to the receipt of a check.

This evening I sat on my front porch nursing a grouch and a returned manuscript. My groceryman down the street, looked over and saw me loafing while he labored. He concluded that if I would not work he had better collect his bill. So he sent his delivery boy over with a statement of my account and I gave it a reading. Then I handed it back to the boy with the rejection slip that I still held in my hand. The slip said: "We have so many of a similar nature on hand at this time," etc., and seemed to apply fittingly to the grocer's MS.

The grocer had some of the qualities that go to make up a successful author. He was not discouraged, as is too often the case with young contributors. In fact he seemed to take renewed courage.

In a few minutes the boy came back with a literary gem, free from all the standard faults. The author's sentences were short and punctuated with periods that went clear through the paper. His language was simple and plain. Entirely free from long words and intricate phrases. There was a dearth of dialogue but you could tell what he was driving at from the first sentence. There was no tiresome description. The spelling was a little bad. For instance, he left the final n off of damn. Another virtue that I discovered in his MS. was

this—that he did not—as some young authors do—seek to write around a theme with which he was unacquainted. Instead he wrote as he felt and garnished with local color and finger prints.

I was so impressed with this last offering that I bought it at his own price—which was about \$1.00 per word.

The grocer was so overjoyed at being able to get through a shell heretofore impregnable that he spread the news. In a few minutes the butcher's boy came over and I at once returned his MS. with another rejection slip from my collection. Aside from other reasons the butcher's offering was poorly written and on soiled paper. This is bad form, as any editor will testify. If I must receive statements, I want them properly presented or I will ignore them entirely.

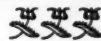
But the butcher was not disheartened. He came right over in person. His name is Schultz and he weighs something like two hundred and ten pounds, whereas I weigh around one hundred and thirty. He had the original MS. and upon second reading I found that it conveyed clearly the idea that the man had in mind. I accepted it, however, not so much upon its merits as upon the selling methods of the author.

After the butcher had gone I got to thinking that perhaps closer personal touch between author and publisher might not be such a bad thing. If Schultz can deliver the goods that way why not I?

I have concluded to get a large suit case, carefully pack all my MSS. and bring them to market. I may get Mr. Schultz to come with me.

Would you suggest that we come first to Denver or start East?

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Meeting the Editors in Person

Harry E. Maule, A. H. Bittner, Anthony M. Rud

BY ALBERT WILLIAM STONE

(This series began in the August, 1926, issue.)



ALBERT WILLIAM STONE

ANY writer who suffers from the hallucination that magazine publishing falls short of being a business, in any particular, should make a pilgrimage to New York and conduct a first-hand investigation. He will discover, among other things, that the editor who is

not a business man as well as an editor has no permanent or important place in the magazine manufacturing industry. I am speaking, please understand, of that class of magazines known variously as "popular," "print paper," "pulp," "all-fiction," etc. The kind that sell for from ten to twenty-five cents a copy and depend almost altogether upon virile fiction appeal for their sales, and upon those sales for the major part of their income.

Out at Garden City, Long Island, the famous publishing plant of Doubleday, Page & Company is one of the showplaces of that beautiful little city. Your railroad ticket reads "Country Life Press," which is the name of the station at which you alight. Three-quarters of an hour are consumed on the journey from the Pennsylvania station in New York. When you arrive you find it difficult to realize that the teeming metropolis of nearly seven million people—not all of them authors, either—is only a few miles away. For Garden City is a place of wide streets, spacious lawns, beautiful trees and

all the other things that go to make up a community of real homes.

The big publishing plant covers acres, and is surrounded by groves, lawns and flowerbeds. Great stone steps lead into the high-ceilinged reception hall. A girl at a desk labeled "information" directed me to a huge room flanking the reception hall, and began manipulating the switchboard before her. In the room designated, I sank into a luxuriously upholstered divan and wondered what the editor would do to the contributor exhibiting the colossal nerve to call for an interview. I really felt as if I might be committing lese majesty in invading this temple of luxury.

But I needn't have feared. In a few minutes a smiling young man came in and looked me over. He held out his hand.

"I'm Bittner," he said.

A. H. Bittner, associate editor, whose particular charge is *The Frontier* magazine! I had sold him a thing or two, and corresponded with him a lot. I had read his excellent articles in *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*. It may surprise him to know that I stood somewhat in awe of him. And here he was, a boyish figure, either very glad to see me or else simulating gladness with consummate art. He sat down by my side and we began to talk.

When I began to fire questions at him, however, he stopped me.

"Wait until I get Mr. Maule. He'll tell you everything you want to know."

IN two or three minutes he was back, with Harry E. Maule in tow. Mr. Maule is favorably known to thousands of writers for his friendly criticisms, his informative letters and his system of developing writers

who interest him professionally. He knows how to throw a note of real cordiality into even the briefest missives. He is delightfully informal in his correspondence, even with writers to him unknown. He directs his corps of associate and assistant editors with a skillful hand. Despite his numerous duties and activities as an important directing editorial head, he finds time to travel west occasionally, and to get into intimate touch with the land that figures so largely in the stories at least two of his magazines print.

Mr. Maule is a slender chap whose dark hair is beginning to show threads of gray. In speech he is incisive. I missed the familiar "New York accent," and in a moment knew why. He told me that he was raised in Denver and educated in the West. He asked me about one or two of his old friends in that city.

"I'm coming out West this summer," he remarked after a few minutes' conversation. "Going to join a pack train in Montana."

I recalled that Mr. Maule has often taken his summer vacation in Colorado and other Western states. For several minutes we talked of these things. Then we took up the business that had brought me to New York.

Mr. Maule likes his stories to be authentic and "close to the ground," he told me. Being a Western man, he knows what "close to the ground" is. He likes accuracy of detail in stories he buys for his magazines. There must be something more than mere action, plot, atmosphere, characterization. The story must ring true, be convincing and be susceptible of the closest scrutiny with reference to geographical, historical and technical detail. One look at the keen eyes and countenance of this editor tells the observant interviewer that he is a business man in every sense of the word, with a really extraordinary power of perception.

It is not hard to understand why Mr. Maule insists upon authenticity in the stories he purchases for publication. Being a business man, he watches very carefully the reactions of his readers. Subscribers in the cow country, for instance, are exceedingly quick to detect an inaccuracy of detail in a story—and many of them are equally quick to write in and tell the editor about it.

For instance, a cowboy once said to me: "Whatever yuh do, don't ever have any

cowpuncher in yore stories make camp by th' side of a crick, or in a draw. Sometime in th' night there's liable to be a cloudburst up in th' mountains, an' yore puncher'll wake up to find himself plumb drowned!"

It is this sort of thing that Mr. Maule insists shall be kept in mind for his stories. The holster must be worn on the proper side of the character's body; no cowboy is allowed to mount his "hoss" from the wrong side; a rodeo must be described with an eye to fact; gold must be discovered in the right kind of formation; cowboy "lingo" must be in accordance with the speech of the particular part of the West in which the story lies, and so on.

BUT there is another thing required by Mr. Maule of his contributors, if the best results are to be obtained for both writer and editor. That is "volume."

"Volume of output is essential to the building up of a following for any author," he said. "An occasional story in any one magazine by a writer will not accomplish this end. The writer's value to the magazine is determined by the size and character of his following—the number of readers who like his work, buy the magazine partly because of it, and let us know how they feel about it.

"This end is not usually attained by submitting stories to a wide variety of magazines. Perhaps the author may take pride in seeing his name in the tables of contents of a dozen or more magazines; but unless he is extraordinarily prolific, he is not as a rule building up a following in any one of those publications. Hence the editor cannot gauge his value as evidenced by the approval or disapproval of any considerable number of his magazine's readers."

This brought up a point about which I had always been puzzled.

"How do you ascertain the feelings of readers about an author's work?" I asked. "Do you receive enough voluntary letters from them to sound the general attitude?"

Mr. Maule smiled.

"Well," he replied, "magazine publishing, you understand, is a science. We have been in the business a great many years, and in that time we have learned many ways of gauging the re-action of readers to any single issue.

"Our circulation representatives, for in-

stance, are scattered all over the country. It is their business, among other duties, to check this re-action. They talk with the owners of newsstands and the managers of central news distributing agencies. They gather up a lot of information relative to how such and such an issue was received; what comments have been caught relative to the stories printed therein; why certain issues have not sold as well as previous ones, or vice versa.

"It is quite common for the circulation of a magazine to fluctuate by thousands of copies. One number may be several thousand below another in sales. Or it may be several thousand above. There are times when we have extraordinary drops, or jumps, in circulation; and naturally a variety of reasons are assigned. Many times these reasons have to do with the reading matter; a new serial by a popular author, for instance, whose name is printed on the cover, may shoot the sales skyward.

"The fact that the author has a following is responsible. Readers have read his stuff and like it. The mere announcement that he is in the table of contents will create a demand for the magazine. That is why I stress the importance of volume in an author's output. He is a highly important factor in the financial success of the publication."

Mr. Maule also pointed out the importance of volume of output as a factor in rate of payment.

The larger his output of acceptable material, the larger the word rate he may command from the treasurer's office, Mr. Maule implied. The occasional contributor may be in no position to demand an advanced rate since he has no definite following in that magazine. When he has demonstrated his worth, however, from a reader-demand standpoint, the editor is likely to raise his rate voluntarily. He must first demonstrate his pulling power as a box-office attraction; otherwise he must content himself with a rate of compensation somewhere near the minimum.

The titles of Mr. Maule's three magazines tell the story of their separate requirements in a fiction way, with reasonable clarity. *Short Stories* wants short-stories of adventure, novelettes, serials. They may be laid in the West or anywhere else where adventures are had. *Frontier* and *West* both use

Western stories, but those in *West* are more of the rollicking cowboy type than those in *Frontier*.

Mr. Bittner takes a genuine, enthusiastic interest in writers and their wares. He is a young man of demonstrated capability in choosing the right stories for his magazine. He loves a good story as some men love their wives. When he buys, his letter of acceptance inevitably reflects the joy he has experienced at once more discovering "pay dirt." He can get as excited over a thrilling situation in a story as a debutante over her first coming-out party.

You will never lose, gentle writer, by taking infinite pains with a story you purpose submitting to Bittner. He has a keen appreciation of painstaking work, and never forgets to let you know it. If he can send you a check, he does so with almost hilarious satisfaction. I don't mean that he is easy to sell; far from it. He is an excellent judge of a good story, and a story must be pretty good to get by him. But once the yarn has passed the test, Bittner is almost ready to fall on your neck for letting him buy it.

Owing to a luncheon engagement in New York I had to cut my visit short. Mr. Bittner escorted me clear to the depot, and as the train was pulling out, shouted:

"I'll be looking for your stuff!"

ON the way out I was introduced fleetingly to Anthony Rud, the author-editor of *West*, whose stories appear with considerable frequency in other magazines. Mr. Rud's huge hand completely enclosed mine as we shook hands. He has the tonnage displacement of a football star, and, like Bittner, he is young. There is only one other editor on earth who approaches him in avordupois, so far as I know, and that is Arthur E. Scott, editor of "Top Notch" of the Street & Smith publications. Not fat, mind you; just big. And both mighty capable editors.

Mr. Bittner took me through the vast Doubleday Page basement on the way to the depot, as a short-cut. It looks to cover about five acres, although of course it is not so large as that; and it is literally jammed with millions of books, all neatly covered with paper. I gasped when I saw them.

"What do you intend to do with all these books?" I demanded. There were enough

to fill two or three gross of ordinary Carnegie libraries, it seemed to me.

"Sell 'em," Bittner replied with a grin. "What did you suppose?"

A look at that immense stock of books would bolster up the waning hopes of any discouraged author. If one publishing concern can do business on such a mammoth scale, the demand for material from writers must almost exceed the powers of calculation of expert mathematicians. And to see the truckloads of magazines snorting away from the plant—trucks piled as high as old-fashioned loads of hay—cannot fail to impress any observer with the magnitude of this vast industry. Someone has estimated that about ten million story manuscripts find their way into the editorial offices of New York magazines annually, of which a goodly number are sent winging back to their creators with more or less promptness; nevertheless, consideration of the huge bulk of business done by the publishing companies will give rise to the query:

"What would become of the business if all the writers were to quit?"

The kindness shown me by Mr. Maule

and his associates strengthened the conviction that most editors believe in encouraging the author, however insignificant he may be. For I am just one of the little fellows. In the rank and file of the army writers I am a mere private, a "doughboy," hardly more than a raw recruit. Many a rejection comes my way, accompanied by a jovially sarcastic letter—or even by a rejection slip. Is this the best I can do?

Call on a few New York editors of the caliber of those I have thus far described, and note the change that takes place in your consciousness. Heretofore you have been sending stories to "institutions," manned by vague personalities whose printed rejections or cold, one-line letters declining your wares may have had the effect of a shower of cold rain upon your writing enthusiasm.

From now on, however, you are sending your stories to live, keen individuals who know your problems as well as you know them yourself, and who are as anxious to see you succeed as even you could possibly be. If they have never told you so, it is because they literally haven't had the time.

Take my word for it!



This Might Happen To You

By SADEE MEYER

FOR some weeks I have been looking forward to getting at a new story, for I write when teaching elementary school has not killed every speck of vitality.

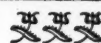
All this week I have been working laboriously on two or three germ plots trying to see if I couldn't get one of them to sprout an honest-to-goodness story. They have been in my note book for months and I had hoped they had acquired enough strength to grow.

This morning I was mentally summing up a luncheon-party marketing list while making up my bed in my one-room kitchenette palace when a complete story struck me full-force. I stopped the marketing list and began to plot it. It went like a streak of lightning. While I was putting the cover

on the day-bed, I said to myself, "I must get my note-book. This is a peach." At that instant I saw it was ten minutes of ten and I knew that if I didn't hurry I'd never get the things for that party I had been concocting in my mind when the story side-tracked the grocery list.

"I'll put it down when I get home," I said to myself. "This is too good to lose."

The moment I got in from market I flew for my note-book. I sat down—but it was gone. Nothing I can do brings it back from wherever it has gone. The maddening thing is that I have a feeling that it wants to come back, but that I didn't treat it well enough on its first visit. When will literary aspirants learn to "Nail it, while the nailing's good"?



Forms of the Drama

A Simple Key to the Easier Understanding of the Classes Into Which Stage and Screen Plays Automatically Fall.

BY R. ADDISON ADAMS

Dramatic Critic, Indianapolis Star.

IN THE early days of the stage, when men were making their first crude efforts to amuse, instruct, or entertain by means of plays, the two great divisions of drama—tragedy and comedy—were enough. Even Shakespeare recognized no intermediate classes, but sternly cast his romantic tales in one mold or the other.

Gradually, as stage-craft and play-craft have advanced, modifications of these two great divisions have crept in and have become standardized. From the tragedy, which was first of all a play of serious import, have developed the straight drama, with its numerous branches, the comedy-drama, and the melodrama. From the comedy have sprung high comedy and low comedy, farce, and burlesque.

Pure tragedy has no comedy parts. It represents a struggle of the principal characters against social or civic law, against their passions, their environment, or almost anything else of a dramatic nature great enough to oppose them. It advances steadily toward an inevitable ending in which is shown the futility of the individual in the struggle with the forces that circumstance has thrown against him. It is not even necessary that the principals die to constitute a tragedy. If they fail in their struggle upward and the curtain falls with their object still unattained and apparently unattainable then the play is a tragedy.

The universal demand for a happy ending in motion picture plays has pretty well excluded the tragedy from the screen, and even where a producer does set forth to make a picture with a tragic ending he bows to this demand to the extent that he requires the story to have plenty of comedy sandwiched in between the serious scenes. "Greed," the

Von Stroheim picture, is a good example of screen tragedy. In no case must the comedy detract from the serious theme, and "Greed" was exceedingly well directed in that respect. Those who contributed the comedy were closely bound up in the tragic theme and, even at their funniest moments, were still objects of pity.

While all plays come under the general heading of drama, there is one form which takes that very name. Its ramifications are many, however, so to distinguish one type from another we find it masquerading under the various titles of domestic drama, psychological drama, society drama, historical drama, costume drama, human-interest drama, and many more.

This form of play is usually a serious narrative in which comedy has no place. In fact, it may be a tragedy in all but the ending—that must be happy. It often sets a problem in the first act, or first reel, as the case may be, and works steadily toward a climax. No matter what obstacles the principal characters are forced to overcome they finally attain to their objective, and, if they be hero and heroine, are found in each others' arms at the end. "If Winter Comes" was an excellent example of straight drama transferred to the screen. "White Cargo" and "Rain" are fine stage examples.

THE main distinguishing characteristic of the straight drama in any of its subdivisions are its seriousness, its absolute plausibility, its tenseness and suspense, its steadfast progress toward the climax, and its ultimate happy ending.

The comedy-drama is simply the straight drama into which comedy elements have been introduced. It, too, is mainly serious

and almost always points a moral. The principal difference is that whenever something pathetic happens to bring the audience to the verge of tears the comedy characters do something funny to turn the tears into laughter. In motion-picture plays this has come to be the most popular form, so that you may see examples of it in some theater or other almost any day. Playing comedy against near-tragedy makes for balance and usually pleases both those who want to laugh and those who want to cry.

In comedy-drama, however, the serious intent of the play is always apparent and the flashes of comedy are little more than that, designed mainly to relieve the situation and prevent the play from becoming morbid. In fact, on the legitimate stage, the comedy-drama is often of so serious a nature that it is difficult to see why the word comedy should be used in designating its form at all. Of course, in screen plays the proportion of comedy is much greater.

The principal characters themselves seldom contribute to the comedy of a comedy-drama. A good example of this is found in "The Goose Hangs High," in which the father and mother are the center of the near-tragedy, while the children contribute the comedy element. All comedies on the screen that have anything at all of a serious, plausible story in them fall into the comedy-drama class.

IF THE comedy-drama is the most popular form of screen play, the second most important division is the melodrama. The first two syllables are from the Greek *melos*, music, and the latter has always played a great part in stage melodramas. When the heroine is turned out into the cold, cruel world, she staggers off to the soft, sweet strains of "Hearts and Flowers." As music now plays a great part in all screen plays it no longer stands as a trademark of the melodrama.

Melodrama differs from the other forms of drama in that one or more of the principals are in constant peril practically from the lifting of the curtain. This peril may be death; it may be a shameful exposure; or it may be any number of different things, but whatever it is it must appeal strongly to the emotions of the audience. Therefore, in the old stage melodramas we had heroines

bound to railroad tracks, heroes lowered over cliffs by ropes which were cut asunder slowly to prolong the agony, and pretty girls placed on sawmill carriages that relentlessly bore them toward the whirling steel.

Melodrama, too, is largely a matter of plot. It often has comedy in it, but it always has a person, or persons, working toward the destruction of one or more of our principal characters. To illustrate: If the hero, riding through a pass in the Cumberland Mountains, is mistaken by a mountaineer for a revenue officer and is shot, the incident may be part of a mountain drama, or a tragedy, according to the ultimate ending. But if an enemy of the principal character, who has kidnapped the heroine, arranges with the mountaineer to have him shot, seemingly by accident, then we have a plot against his life and the safety of the kidnapped girl, which automatically turns the play into a melodrama.

"The Air Mail," a splendid screen play of its type, although dedicated to the heroism of the aviators in Uncle Sam's employ, and designed as something of an epic of the air mail service, was a melodrama. Had it been confined to the story of a crook getting a job in the aerial mail department, becoming imbued with a spirit of loyalty, and finally deciding to be true to his trust, it would have been a straight drama. But when a plot by other crooks against his life and the money he carries, is introduced, and the girl he loves is shown at mercy of tramps in a desolate cottage in the desert, then we have melodrama.

As I have already pointed out, melodrama can usually be distinguished from the other forms by the fact that someone is engaged in a desperate plot against our principal characters. Once in awhile the rule is reversed and we have a principal character plotting against the other players, or against society. "The Purple Mask," "The Gray Seal," and "Raffles," are examples of this type, for in them we find our principal character performing unlawful acts in a sensational manner. Any play that deals in sensational surprises and thereby involves the principal characters deeper in their predicament, or suddenly rescues them from it, save that it be a farce, is melodrama.

COMEDY of the stage is divided into two main classes—high comedy and just plain comedy. The latter, when it reaches the slapstick and burlesque stages, is often designated as low comedy. High comedy, which is also known as a "comedy of manners," is a play in which all the characters, principals included, furnish the laughter through their individual mannerisms, their clever lines, or their foolish ones. The plot is simple and usually consists of just story enough to introduce the players, to keep them before the audience as much as possible, to furnish a modicum of suspense, and to provide the players with the lines best suited to them.

In a comedy of manners it is not even necessary that the principal characters be the funniest in the play, but it is requisite that all of the players act their parts with the utmost seriousness, apparently unconscious that they are being funny. "The Rivals," the Richard Brinsley Sheridan play of 150 years ago, lately revived by Minnie Maddern Fiske, is an excellent type of high comedy. Satire often plays an important part in this form of the drama.

The comedy of manners is so much a comedy of conversation rather than action that it has not proved practicable for the screen. The plain comedy, on the other hand, is a play in which action predominates. Here the principal characters are often the funniest in the cast. They may even recognize their ability to amuse, as does Raymond Hitchcock, and usually play their parts with more or less hilarity. Sometimes the plot is scarcely stronger than that of high comedy, but it is always less elegant. The chief character keeps the audience in an uproar of laughter through what he does, rather than what he says. Of course, the screen comedy is in a class by itself. There is no need to analyze it. Everybody recognizes it and if we do not have some radical improvement in the near future everybody will soon dread it.

Of the sub-divisions of comedy, farce is the most important.

This form of the drama has had quite a vogue during the past few years on the legitimate stage and most of the successful farces have been adapted for the screen. But it is seldom that we find a farce written directly for the screen.

The farce is constructed for laughing pur-

poses only. It tells no serious story as do most of the other forms of the drama, and points no moral. Quite to the contrary, in fact, for we usually find it making fun of our established social customs, our ideas of propriety, and more than all, of our innate sense of dignity. It is a play of plot in which impossible characters get into still more impossible situations with incredible swiftness. If these situations can be made mildly shocking to our ordinary sense of decorum, so much the better. This has been amply proved in the long run of bedroom farces. The farce originated in France where humor is much broader than it is in this country, and there it has been developed to perfection. Many of our most amusing farces came originally from the French.

"Little Miss Bluebeard," and "Up in Mabel's Room" are good examples of recent screen farces adapted from stage plays. Another screen farce that comes to mind is Harold Lloyd's "Why Worry?" which, it will be remembered, made fun of Mexican revolutions. The farce always makes fun of something, but it never parodies anything.

We do have a form of screen play, however, that parodies. This comes under one of the subheads of comedy and is known as burlesque. Burlesque such as that found at Mutual or Columbia "wheel" theaters is really musical farce and not burlesque at all. Noah Webster says burlesque is "ludicrous imitation." We find it in such film comedies as "Two Wagons, Both Covered," "Feet of Mud," "The Shriek of Agony," and a host of others. True, some of these are burlesque in title only, but many of them really "ludicrously imitate" the original. Almost everyone has seen "Uncle Tom's Cabin" burlesqued.

TO sum up, then:

A tragedy is a play with a serious purpose, no comedy and an unhappy ending.

A drama, under any of its sub-classifications is a serious play with a tense, suspenseful plot, also devoid of comedy, but with a happy ending.

A comedy-drama is also a serious play, but one in which comedy is introduced through one or more minor characters to follow closely on a scene of sadness and balance the play. The ending is happy.

A melodrama is a play in which both com-

edy and tragedy may appear, but the ending must be happy for the principal characters and must find the villain frustrated. It is a serious play, often of sensational plot, and one or more of the principal characters must be in peril practically from the rise of the curtain.

In a comedy-drama we found the comedy subordinate to the drama, so, in a *straight comedy* we find the drama subordinate to the humorous lines and situations. A comedy is usually funny only to those looking on. The story is almost always a simple one with a straightforward plot. The characters all contribute to the fun, either through their attitude toward the situation in which they find themselves, their odd appearance, their manners, or their funny lines. This, too, of course, can have nothing but a happy ending. High comedy is a play of polite conversation, while plain comedy is a play of action.

While the comedy has a simple story, the *farce*, to the contrary, has a story crammed with complications. Comedies usually are played in a leisurely manner, while the farce is dependent upon speed to cover up its wild vagaries of plot. In addition to speed and plot, another distinguishing feature of the farce is its tendency to make fun of some established custom or belief.

The burlesque is a "ludicrous imitation" pure and simple.

Each of these forms of the drama is subject to variation in practice. Thus we have plays with a blending of the characteristics of three or four forms and it is often difficult to decide just exactly what classification a specific offering comes under. Usually, however, it is only necessary to recognize the preponderance of a certain definite element to name at once the form into which the play falls.



Plot Creation by the "Sink or Swim" Method

BY WILLARD E. HAWKINS

(This series began in the November, 1925, issue.)

THE Indians are credited with an effective, if drastic, method of teaching their male progeny to take care of themselves in the water. The youthful brave is tossed far out into the flood. If he does not swim, he must sink. The consequence is that, after getting his mouth and eyes full of water and gulping spasmodically a few times, he strikes out for the shore.

Human nature seems endowed with ability to develop power to do things it is called upon to do.

This principle is useful to the plot-builder. Now and then a plot bursts into full bloom in the mind of the fiction-writer; but unfortunately, most of us cannot afford to wait for these full-blown ideas. We must "go after inspiration with a club," as Jack London expressed it. Lacking a story plot,

we must evolve one out of such material as comes to hand—must evolve even the material, if necessary.

One method of doing this may be called the "sink-or-swim" method, because of its similarity to the primitive way of giving the young brave confidence in the water.

It consists in taking an interesting character or set of characters and plunging them into a promising situation—in beginning a story before we have one to begin. The writer who employs this method may no more have an idea how the tale is going to come out than the Indian boy can know how he is going to navigate the water; but instinctively he strikes out toward the climactic shore. If he is successful, he has evolved a story.

A pretty big "if." Nevertheless, for the

writer of experience, it may prove an effective method of working.

The plan probably should not be recommended to the novice. For though he may strike out in perfect confidence, what he produces is unlikely to make a story, because he has not a sufficiently clear idea of story structure to mold his material into the proper form. The practised writer instinctively or by design follows a trend that will introduce suspense, action, logical sequence, surprise, and a climax into the developed tale. If he finds himself unable to attain these things, he comes to a standstill, perhaps; but at least he rejects innumerable ideas which lack the essentials. The novice is in danger of accepting the first commonplace suggestions that come to mind.

Another advantage in this method for the experienced writer is that it gives him freshness of material. Loss of interest in a theme often results from planning it out too carefully in detail.

Starting with a piquant opening situation and letting the story take its course—within certain limits—has all the zest, from a writer's viewpoint, of exploring a new country, of making new acquaintances, or of reading a story by some other author. The zest is likely to be reflected in a more spontaneous narrative than would have resulted from following a prescribed and familiar outline.

To be sure, the plan also has its drawbacks. The writer who follows it will stumble along many a blind trail, will run against many a stone wall. When he plunges into an opening situation, it is largely a gamble whether he has chosen a "winner" or a "flivver." But with experience he will learn to avoid unpromising leads. If the story does not begin to take form—to show indications of working toward a dimly perceived but real climax—soon after the start, it is not likely to materialize into a successful yarn.

The author's attitude toward his story, however, will usually approximate more closely the attitude of his prospective readers when he follows this plan than in any other method of writing, because he is as much in doubt as to the outcome as they are likely to be. The characters are new and full of surprises for him.

LET us, by way of illustration, work out a story plot by the "sink-or-swim" method.

The author is sitting at his desk trying to evolve an idea for a piece of fiction. The harder he thinks, the more amazed he becomes at his own dearth of ideas. "What I need," he reflects, "is a thought-stimulator of some sort—a mental challenge."

He proceeds to go after it. Lacking the plot for a story, he pretends that he has one, and starts in writing it. Since he doesn't know what the story is about, any good starting-place will answer. As a setting for his opening incident, perhaps a country road appeals to him. He may begin to describe it, or he may feel the necessity of putting somebody on the road. A young man in a handsome new roadster will be interesting—say an athletic, well-groomed young man.

This selection, in a sense, casts the die for the story. If a tramp had been chosen, an entirely different story would have resulted.

Now, in order to hold his reader's attention—as well as his own—the author must cause this young man to do something, or to be the object of some action. Action that is unusual and curiosity-arousing would be preferred—action that will provoke the reader's question, "Why?" and cause him to read further.

Several suggestions present themselves, and are rejected. The young man might have a punctured tire, but that, of itself, is commonplace. He might be assailed by a highwayman, but that is hackneyed. Why not let him do something utterly inexplicable—like deliberately running his car into a tree or a gatepost?

This arouses interest—stimulates the author to think. He finds himself asking, "Why should a young man do such a thing?"

It is natural to suppose that the reader's curiosity would be similarly aroused. On this assumption, a story beginning is evolved that reads about as follows:

A high-powered roadster drew up at twilight before the substantial stone gateway of the Templeton estates. Its driver showed no disposition to enter the grounds, although the iron gate was swung back on its hinges as if inviting the traveler to leave the highway and enter the cool, shaded drive within. A rank growth of trees almost hid from view the house to which the drive formed an

approach, but a glimpse of tiled chimney-tops and a gabled roof conveyed the impression of age and substantialness in the structure.

The man who drove the car was strongly built, with the suggestion of an athlete in the poise of his shoulders. Leaning back, he studied the prospect before him with languid appreciation.

After a few moments, the silence was broken by the sound of a motor getting under way. Instantly alert, the man in the roadster bent forward attentively. The sound came from the direction of the tiled mansion within the grounds.

With calculating eye, the driver of the roadster measured the distance between his car and the gateway. Then, giving the engine all the power it could command, he drove straight at the farthermost stone pillar.

THE author, with this introduction, has thrown himself into the flood. It is a case of either swim to a strong climax or fail, so far as this particular story is concerned. He hasn't any more idea why the young man ran into the post than his reader will have—but he immediately begins to think of possible reasons.

Why should a young man purposely run his car into a gatepost? Probably, because he wants it to appear that he has met with an accident. Again, why should he desire this? Perhaps in order that he may be carried into the house. A few more paragraphs are added:

As the crash came, the right fender of the car crumpled like a piece of cardboard. The last gasp of the engine was accompanied by the shattering of lamps and windshield.

When the headlights of the approaching machine illuminated the scene, they revealed the man lying face downward a few feet beyond the wreck. One arm was doubled under him, and his head was jammed against a boulder beside the roadway.

The plot thickens! The author has introduced on the scene new characters who evidently are in some way essential to the hero's deep-laid scheme. It is the author's task now to decide who and what they shall be, and why the young man wanted to get into the house.

His object might be burglary. It might be that he wishes to view some treasure that is guarded within the walls of the home. It might be many things. One appealing suggestion is that he wants to get in because he is in love with a girl who lives there. Perhaps he has quarreled with her and, in response to her "I never want to see you again," has told her, heatedly, "And if I'm

in my right senses, I'll try never to let you."

Suppose a young man had made such an assertion. Would he not be likely, on repenting it, to seek some method of putting himself in the girl's way as if by accident?

But being carried into her home will not get him very far, in the face of such a vow. His pride won't consider relenting toward her merely because a supposed accident has dropped him at her doorstep. He might carry the matter still further by feigning amnesia. Pretending that he does not know the girl, he can begin wooing her again, unhindered by the former vow, which he has supposedly forgotten.

According to the author's pleasure, the fact that the young man is only feigning amnesia could either be disclosed or withheld until the climax.

Should the latter part of the story, as the author approaches it, seem too tame, some new complication could be devised out of thin air, in the same way that the introduction was found. For example, suppose that a highway robbery took place on the night when the young man chose his novel method of obtaining entrance to the house. Suppose that the robbers, being sorely pressed by officers of the law, hid their loot in the automobile which the young man had wrecked by the gatepost. And then suppose that detectives discovered it there.

The predicament of the hero can be imagined. He has committed himself to a pretense of having forgotten who he is. He has destroyed everything that could lead to a discovery of his identity. And now, under suspicion of having committed the robbery, he is in no position to prove that he did not do it. Detectives, watching him closely, may discover him in some act which proves that he is only feigning loss of memory—which will make matters look all the worse for him.

Surely an exciting climax can be evolved from this material. The girl might remain adamant against his new advances, until his arrest for the robbery. Then she could come to the rescue, prove his innocence, forgive him—and perhaps surprise the reader by admitting that she knew from the first that her lover was feigning.

Thus we evolve a plot that could be worked out into a very fair story of its type—all because we plunged boldly into a stimulating situation.

The plan need not necessarily be confined to beginning a story. Sometimes it may prove helpful in rescuing a dull story from the gloomy fate that befalls dull stories. Dullness usually results from the obvious. When events begin to transpire just about as the reader anticipates, he commences to yawn and think about going to bed.

ANALYZE your story; find where these commonplace developments begin; then liven up matters by introducing at those points incidents that are utterly unexpected—incidents that you, the author, cannot at first explain. Work out logical explanations for this interpolated material, and you may redeem the tale. Probably, in the process, you will have found it necessary to discard the original ending.

The process to be followed is largely one of selection and rejection. A development that stimulates the imagination, that brings a gasp or a chuckle to the author's throat, when it occurs to him, that involves something unexpected yet capable of logical explanation, is likely to prove effective in the completed version. As the story evolves, preliminary incidents may have to be discarded. New matter may have to be inserted in the part of the narrative already written. The main thing is to get a start—to evolve a stimulating problem upon which to work.

Once the start is obtained, the process of rolling up a completed story is much the

same as that suggested in our article on "Snowballing a Plot" (May, 1926, issue).

The "sink-or-swim" method is especially suited to tales of mystery and adventure, especially in novelette or book length. In a long story, the author is chiefly concerned in the first half with tangling up the affairs of his characters—he has plenty of space in which to work out the entanglements in the latter half. The plan, however, can be safely applied to short fiction by the author who is sure of his technique.

If he employs the "sink-or-swim" method, the author can, as it were, give an order for the type of story he wishes to write—can strike the keynote in the opening sentence or paragraph. That keynote is likely to dominate the whole story. If he desires to write a mystery story, he can immediately strike the mystery keynote by inventing some inexplicable happening. If he desires to write a story of pathos, a pathetic opening scene will practically necessitate events of similar character throughout. If he desires to write an outdoor adventure story, he can immediately visualize for his opening paragraphs some appropriate scene—such, say, as a mountain pass during a blizzard, with men struggling to force their way against the elements.

The essential attributes for the writer who would follow this method are inventive ability, imagination, and a nice power of discrimination.



THE WRITER'S BRICKS

BY MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

The writer's bricks are his own heartaches and bitter disappointments and disillusionments. The more he has of these, the more he can build.

The price of bricks is high—yes, but one can build beautiful things of bricks, a fort, a cathedral, even a home for the heart. So what do we care if the price of bricks is high?

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S LITERARY MARKET TIPS GATHERED MONTHLY FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

Prize Contests

The Woman's Home Companion, 250 Park Avenue, New York, and *John Day Company*, publishers, 25 W. Forty-fifth Street, New York, have announced a \$50,000 prize novel contest, in which \$25,000 will be awarded for the best novel by a man, and the same amount for the best novel by a woman. In addition to the cash award, the winning authors will receive royalties on American and Canadian book rights in excess of the \$5000 advance guarantee and will retain full motion-picture rights, second serial rights, English rights, all rights to translation into foreign languages, and dramatic rights, relinquishing only American and Canadian book royalties under \$5000 and first serial rights. Formal registration of contestants is being conducted and the entry forms may be had upon request from the John Day Company. The closing date will be July 1, 1927. Writers of any nationality or previous record of accomplishment will be eligible. Novels of as short a length as 50,000 words will be acceptable for the competition, although preference will be given to manuscripts of full novel length. Collaborations also will be accepted except those between men and women authors. That is, two or more men may join in competing for the \$25,000 prize for the best novel written by a man, or two or more women may work for the women's prize. There will be four judges, two men and two women, chosen by the *Woman's Home Companion*, the John Day Company, the Author's League of America, and the American branch of the International Club of Writers, P. E. N. Novels must be written in English and will go anonymously to the judges. According to those who have the contest in charge, it was desired that this competition should not only be the largest in point of awards (since movie and other rights may be sold by the author), but the most liberal in point of conditions. The contest is expected to bring forth many novels of short lengths which have been barred in others.

Scribner's Magazine, 597 Fifth Avenue, New York, has been chosen by the General Federation of Women's Clubs to conduct its educational contest in which prizes totaling \$1000 will be awarded to any club or any woman belonging to a federated club for the best lists in American literature, American music, and American art. Contestants are to prepare the lists as for a home.

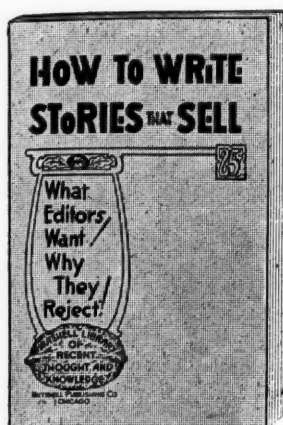
In the literature contest, prizes of \$300 and \$100 will be awarded for the two best lists of two hundred books, written by American authors and published in America. The lists should include some discussion of present-day problems. A third prize of the Cornhill Edition of the works of William Makepeace Thackeray in 26 volumes will be given. Additional awards of \$50 will be made to the two leaders of the honorable-mention list. For the best list of one hundred records for the home, the music of which is composed by Americans, a first prize of \$150 will be awarded and a second prize of \$50. A third prize of The Thistle Edition of the works of J. M. Barrie in twelve volumes is also included. Additional awards of \$25 will be made to the two leaders of this honorable-mention list. In the art contest, prizes of \$150 and \$50 will be awarded for the best essay, not exceeding 2000 words, upon the subject, "America's Distinctive Contribution to Painting and Sculpture." The third prize will be twenty-five volumes of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson. Additional awards of \$25 will be made to the two leaders in the honorable-mention list. Lists should be double-spaced, written on one side of paper only, and submitted in three divisions, if all contests are entered, with name and address at the top of each paper. Entries should be sent to the Editor of the Club Corner, *Scribner's Magazine*, before February 1, 1927.

The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Ohio, offers \$35,000 in cash prizes in a "Book of Movies Game," which began September 1st and will continue to November 10, 1926. The game consists in suggesting titles of motion picture plays for drawings which appear daily in *The Plain Dealer*. The prizes are: First, \$10,000; second, \$5000; third, \$2500; and numerous additional prizes ranging down to \$5 each. Further information may be had upon request from *The Plain Dealer*.

Forbes' Magazine, 120 Fifth Avenue, New York, awards \$5 on publication for the best business-field anecdote in each issue, with a copy of *Forbes' Epigrams* for the second best.

Screenland, published by Magazine Builders, Inc., is now at 236 W. Fifty-fifth Street, New York. It offers monthly gifts for the best fan letter about certain stars or any of their pictures.

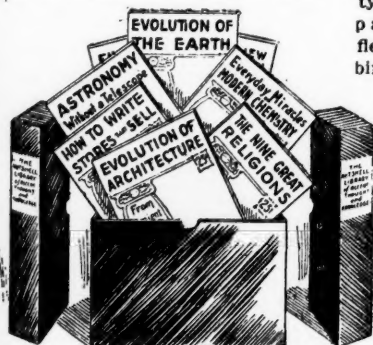
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Order from THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST, 1839 Champa St., Denver, Colo.

Life, 598 Madison Avenue, New York, through its "Scenario Editor," offers its "readers \$50 for each scenario it can use, or a part of which is used, in *Life* Cartoon Comedies—about half a reel each, distributed by Educational Film Exchanges, Inc. The editor will send full instructions and a sample scenario postpaid on request." The announcement states that original "ideas of your own are wanted, or your own brief scenario after absorbing ideas from *Life's* files" that seem suitable for the purpose. "No second-hand ideas lifted from other publications, vaudeville, musical comedy acts or the movies. Your scenarios must be as brief as possible, not over 500 words, and do not have to be in continuity form or any other set form. *Life* is trying to pack into each comedy as many bright, original mirth-provoking ideas as are found in the average feature picture. Each has a definite plot, enlivened by sparkling gags, the plot based on the 'Eternal Triangle,' a good man struggling with a bad man for the love of a good girl."

The Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, New York, announces a \$500 prize contest seeking ideas on advertising newspaper advertising. The contest opened September 20, and closes November 30. The bureau has invited all persons who believe they can write good advertising copy to take part in the competition. Prizes are offered for the three best advertisements submitted to be divided as follows: first prize, \$300; second prize, \$150, and third prize, \$50. In addition to the prizes the bureau reserves the privilege of buying at \$5 each 40 or more advertisements that do not win any of the leading prizes. Copy submitted must deal with the value of newspaper advertising to the national advertiser and must not exceed 200 words, it was announced.

The *Cleveland Press*, Cleveland, Ohio, is conducting a "Lost Line" limerick contest, in which one hundred prizes of \$5 each will be given daily. The prizes will be given for the "cleverest and most fitting last line. Each winner of a daily prize will be eligible for that week's \$1000 prize, and also for any of the thirty-eight grand prizes, ranging from \$10,000 to thirty \$100 prizes," to be awarded at the close of the contest.

The *Cleveland News*, Cleveland, Ohio, is offering \$25,000 in a Movie Title Game of Skill contest. The first prize is \$5000, second \$2500, third, \$1000, fourth, \$500, fifth, \$250. There are twenty-five prizes of \$100 each, one hundred of \$50 each, two hundred of \$25 each, two hundred of \$10 each, and two hundred and fifty of \$5 each. The contest consists in guessing the titles of drawings which are names of motion picture plays. Further information may be had by writing *The Cleveland News*. The contest lasts for seventy days, commencing August 20.

The *Cleveland Press*, Cleveland Ohio, pays \$1 each for recipes printed in a department captioned, "This Work-a-Day World." In another depart-

ment, headed "Menus for Budgeters," in which menus for a day are used, *The Press* also pays \$1 each for recipes.

Woman's World, 107 S. Clinton Street, Chicago, Ill., in its "The Postman's Whistle Page," pays 50 cents each "for new and original recipes, and money-, labor- and time-saving helps."

The Board of Missionary Co-operation of the Northern Baptist Convention, 276 Fifth Avenue, New York, announces its third annual "Stewardship Essay Contest" for young people, with prizes of \$100 down to \$5, closing February 15, 1927. The contest is limited to young people holding membership in the Baptist churches of the Northern Baptist Convention. Particulars may be obtained by application at the headquarters.

The *Household Magazine*, Topeka, Kans., in its department, "Around the Family Table," makes the following announcement: "Let's have contest letters on this subject: 'An Opportunity That Came My Way and How I used It.' \$5 each will be given for the three best letters. Address Rachel Ann Neiswender."

McCall's Magazine, 236 W. Thirty-seventh Street, New York, pays \$1 each for "time, money and labor-saving suggestions." Unacceptable Mss. will be returned if postage accompanies them. Address Housekeeping Exchange Editor.

Better Homes and Gardens, Des Moines, Iowa, pays on acceptance for recipes which should be sent to the editor of its department "Round the Cooks' Table."



Literary Market Tips

Fiction House, Inc., 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, John F. Byrne of the staff writes: "The immediate needs of *Fiction House* are mostly for shorts. *Action*, *Lariat* and *North West* are all in the market for yarns within the 6000-word limit. *Action* and *Lariat* are pretty well fortified with longer material, but *North West* is prepared to give quick action on a Western serial of from 40,000 to 50,000 words. It will also be in the market for a northern serial in the immediate future."

Money Making, 53 Park Place, New York, Sidney Gernsback, editor, is a new monthly put out by the publishers of *Science & Invention*, *Amazing Stories* and three radio magazines. It made its first appearance with the October issue.

Radio Digest, 510 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, "is in the market for a 30,000-word serial—modern romance," according to the feature editor, Harold P. Brown. "We are supplied with short fiction. Manuscripts are returned in three weeks if unavailable." It is not stated that a radio interest is required, but this undoubtedly would enhance the value of a manuscript in the eyes of the editors. *Radio Digest* is listed as paying from 1 cent a word up on publication.

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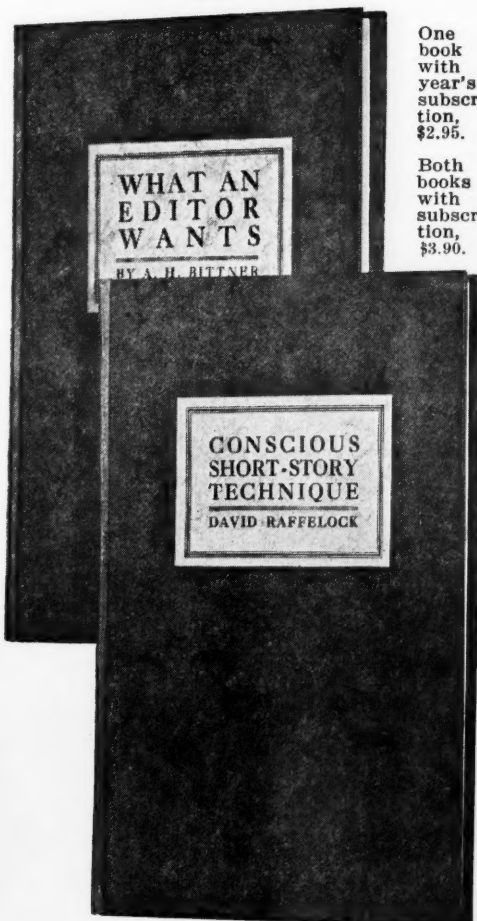
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The 36 Dramatic Situations, Polt. \$1.65.

Writing to Sell, Edwin Wildman. \$2.15.

The Business of Writing, Holliday and Van Rensselaer. \$2.15.

The Author & Journalist

1839 Champa St.

Denver, Colo.

Zest, 47 W. Forty-second Street, New York, the new magazine edited by Robert Thomas Hardy and Charles H. Baker, announces that a program which will cover the origin and purpose of *Zest* will be broadcasted from Station WGBS, Gimbel Brothers, New York City, at 3 p. m., on Monday afternoon, October 10. The wave length of this station is 316 meters. Details and interesting points about the author and play-broker's agency which Mr. Hardy maintains, will also be given.

The Presbyterian Advance, Nashville, Tenn., which recently took over *The Continent*, announces to contributors that it "is seriously oversupplied with manuscripts of a general character." According to the announcement, *The Presbyterian Advance* "pays only for stories and special reports; never for poetry. "Stories suitable for our home department should not be more than 1600 words, preferably 1200."

College Humor, 1050 La Salle Street, Chicago, H. N. Swanson, editor, writes: "Kindly change the preferred length of short-stories for us in your Handy Market List to 5000 words. We also use straight articles or articles with a humorous treatment. We pay most of our writers as good rates as those paid by the leading magazines which you have listed as 'first class.' You will do this magazine a favor by publishing the fact."

The Ozark News and Feature Service, 216 Milligan Building, Springfield, Mo., reports: "The *Ozark News and Feature Service* is just completing its incorporation with a capital of \$30,000 and will be able to transact business on a much larger scale. We are gradually building up a syndicate which will handle writings of numerous writers besides our magazine staff."

Smart Set, 119 W. Fortieth Street, New York, announces that it is not buying verse at the present time.

The Evening Bulletin and *The Public Ledger*, both newspapers published at Philadelphia, Pa., are understood to pay \$5 each for original cross-word puzzles.

Weird Tales has moved its main office from 408 Holliday Building, Indianapolis, to 450 E. Ohio Street, Chicago.

The Baltimore and Ohio Magazine, Mount Royal Station, Baltimore, Md., is not in the market for anecdotes of railroad workers, according to a contributor.

The new address of *Cinema Art*, Cinema Art Publishing Co., an illustrated motion-picture magazine, is 220 W. Forty-second Street, New York. H. L. Dieck and H. G. Gardner are associate editors.

The Spur, 425 Fifth Avenue, New York, informs a contributor that it pays on acceptance, but that small checks are usually made out and forwarded only once a month.

The Authors Business Bureau, Fisk Building, Broadway at Fifty-seventh Street, New York, writes: "*The Authors Business Bureau* wishes to announce that it has taken over the syndicate firm, *The Hostess Syndicate*, and is preparing an extensive campaign in newspaper fiction syndication. If agreeable, we should like to have our company listed in your directory as requiring published and unpublished material submitted to us for consideration. We are in need of swift, clean short-stories and serials suitable for newspaper publication and will make the usual syndicate arrangement with authors. This allows 50 per cent of the net sales as royalty. Manuscripts must be accompanied by return postage and self-addressed envelope, and must be typewritten on one side of the paper only. Prompt decisions will be given, if possible within a few days, and rights owned and controlled by the author must be plainly stated in submitting published stories."

The Guild Publishing Company, Philadelphia, which announced in the July issue of *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* that it would publish a new monthly magazine in the fall for which it was soliciting material, now writes through the associate editor, C. M. Stuart, the following: "Our plans have been somewhat altered. A separate company, Romance Publishers, located at 1619 Sansome St., Philadelphia, Pa., will publish the new magazine, to be called *Tales of Temptation*. The Guild Publishing Company will have no part in this. One of the owners of the Guild will be the sole owner of Romance Publishers and will operate from the address given above. *Tales of Temptation*, 1619 Sansome Street, Philadelphia, Mr. Stuart further writes, "will be pleased to consider stories which fall within the scope of its title, which is almost self-explanatory. We desire terse, crisp, well-written stories of the temptations of women, preferably with a highly emotional love element therein, stressing that the right way is the best way. We would like to see stories in which the action begins in the first paragraph and continues until the end. The magazine will be a combination of 'confession' type and love-story type of tale, but we do not want stories in the first person unless they are of exceptional merit. In view of the fact that the greatest number of temptations probably exist where the greatest number of people are congregated, the locale of the stories should avoid what is known as 'country.' Night life, city streets, jazz palaces, etc., afford far better opportunity to meet our requirements. Also 'studio' life and stage life, department stores. Sentimental verse up to 16 lines will also be used. Fiction may range from 2500 to 5000 words. We may occasionally use a novelette of 15,000 to 20,000 words. Payment will be made at the rate of 1/2¢ up per word, and will be made on a scheduled date each month, irrespective of date of publication of material."

Music, 527 Fifth Avenue, New York City, has been discontinued.

A. & C. Boni, 39 W. Eighth Street, New York, have taken over the publishing business of *Thomas Seltzer, Inc.*, 5 W. Fiftieth Street, New York.

Everybody's Magazine, Spring and Macdougall Streets, New York, Frank Quinn, editor, writes: "My term as editor of *Everybody's* will expire with the November issue. At present our new plans have not been worked out in sufficient detail for further information." *Everybody's* has announced a change in policy effective with the December issue, following a change of ownership. Full details were published in the September *AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*. With that issue, *Everybody's* will become an all-fiction magazine.

The Mohawk Magazine, 224 Fourth Avenue, New York, is a new rotogravure magazine of over twenty pages published by the Mohawk Rubber Co., Akron O., and distributed by local dealers in Mohawk tires. Photographs, illustrated articles on scenic and historic places and tours, on touring, auto-camping, bus-line developments, etc., are used, as well as camping hints, editorials, occasionally a helpful or enthusiasm-creating verse on motoring, and sales-building material, including cartoons. S. S. Miller is president of the rubber company, J. F. Jones, sales manager.

The Bobbs-Merrill Company, publishers, will move sometime this month from their present location on E. Vermont Street, to 724 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis.

Voice, 227 Borden Avenue, L. I., New York, a trade-journal for druggists, is now published bi-monthly. It is edited by James W. Donahy.

College Humor, 1050 N. La Salle Street, Chicago, informs contributors on its checks that it buys first American serial rights, specifying that if book, dramatic, motion picture or other rights are sold, credit will be given *College Humor* in some prominent place on the back of the title page, on the program or at the head of the first reel following the title and author.

Home Equipment, Des Moines, Ia., has been merged with *House Furnishing Review*, 71 Murray Street, New York.

Libertain Newspaper Syndicate, 2497 N. Gower Street, Hollywood, Calif., writes: "Kindly tell your readers that we are not in the market at present for material. We have enough writers who can furnish us material on the assignment basis and we cannot read any manuscripts that are submitted to us unsolicited."

The Ohio Druggist, Columbus, Ohio, is a new general drug trade journal and the official publication of the Ohio State Pharmaceutical Association.

The Nazarene Publishing House, 2923 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, Mo., reports it does not pay for poems and can accept only a very small part of the contributions it receives.

Frederick A. Stokes Company, book publishers, 443 Fourth Avenue, New York, H. D. Fish of the editorial department, writes: "We are always looking for first-class novels, juveniles and non-fiction."

W. A. Wilde Company, book publishers at 131 Clarendon Street, Boston, Allan H. Wilde, editor, writes: "We publish juvenile fiction of from 40,000 to 50,000 words, semi-educational or for semi-supplementary reading, and inspirational, historical and travel non-fiction for adults and juveniles, but we desire to tell authors to make their work truly worth-while."

Popular Science Monthly, 250 Fourth Avenue, New York, Sumner N. Blossom, editor, writes to a contributor: "*Popular Science Monthly* is in constant need of the brief illustrated stories that make up a large part of its editorial content each month. We wonder if you are taking advantage of this need and are sending us everything you have in our line. We are always in the market for stories and photographs of new machines, processes and discoveries, time and labor-saving tools and useful accessories for the home and automobile. Such stories should be interesting not only as news, but also useful to the average man in the every-day affairs of life. In addition we can use from time to time sets of photographs illustrating the most modern methods of manufacture of products used by large numbers of persons, provided they show something new or unusual. For our larger articles we seek timely, non-technical accounts of scientific progress, stories which demonstrate how science and mechanics with their inventions and discoveries affect our lives, how they are actually applied in our homes. Practical, concrete, personal application is one of our chief aims. Material which conveys something of the drama and romance of modern science and mechanics is particularly acceptable. Interpretations of recent research in our field are always welcome. Articles should be well illustrated either with striking photographic prints or with drawings that can be adapted by our artists. No manuscript should exceed 3000 words in length. Stories for the Home Workshop should tell how to make objects so useful, practical and original that a large number of our readers will feel impelled to make them: those for the Better Shop Methods Department should contain material that will help machinists, automobile repairmen, blacksmiths, pattern-makers and other mechanics in their work. Our minimum rates are \$3 for each picture accepted and 1 cent a word for the text used. Everything submitted will be acted on at once. If suitable, a check will go forward immediately. Otherwise we will return your material promptly so that you may submit it elsewhere."

The Horseman, edited by George M. Gahagan, from 301 Jackson Building, Indianapolis, Ind., has changed its title to *Horseman and Fair World*.

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Prose, per thousand words.....\$1.00
Verse, per line (minimum 25c)......02

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THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST
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The Kiwanis Magazine, 164 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, "is devoted to carrying news of the club, district activities and articles that adhere very closely to the objects of Kiwanis International, making our field more limited than a general magazine," writes Charles Reynolds, managing editor.

Wheeler-Nicholson, Inc., Newspaper Syndicate, 373 Fourth Avenue, New York, is reported by contributors to be very slow in reporting on material.

Your Right Work, published quarterly by the Vocational Library, Mount Morris, Ill., Frederick Purdy, vocational consultant, publisher, made its first appearance with the July-August-September issue. It deals with vocational guidance, money-making opportunities in all lines, character analysis, etc.

Kenneth Wilcox Payne became editor of *The New Eve*, 152 W. Forty-second Street, New York, with its September issue. This monthly specializes on femininity and is using fiction, covering fashion, sports, and the theater, as well as beauty topics. It has a men's department.

Hot Dog, 1005 Ulmer, Cleveland, Ohio, Jack Dinsmore, editor, informs its readers that it will soon change its name to *Satire*, but will otherwise be the same.

"The Poets' Corner" of *The Oregon Journal*, prints about a dozen signed poems in each Sunday edition, for which it makes no remuneration. No poems are returned or criticized and contributors are advised to keep a copy of submitted material. Bob Swayze, president of the Northwest Poetry society, is the Poets' Corner editor.

Greenville Talbott is the new editor of *The Fourth Estate*, 25 W. Forty-third Street, New York, succeeding Walter Sammis, who has resigned. Thomas Barrett, associate editor, has been named managing editor.

Murray Breese has been made managing editor of The Topics Publishing Company, Inc., of New York, publishers of *Drug Topics*, *Wholesale Drug-gist*, *Display Topics*, and *Drug Trade News*.

Farmer's Dispatch, St. Paul, Minn., has suspended publication. *Farm Life*, Spencer, Ind., has taken over its subscription lists.

The Kansas City Star Magazine, Kansas City, Mo., is understood to have been discontinued. Its place has been taken on the Sunday edition of the *Kansas City Star* by a gravure section.

The Lumber World Review, Chicago, has been sold to A. R. Kriechbaum, president of the Kriechbaum Publishing Company of St. Louis. *The Lumber World* changed its name with the September issue to the *Chicago Lumberman*. The publication, which appears monthly, is edited by Schuyler Drury, former advertising manager of *The Lumber Manufacturer & Dealer*, published by the Kriechbaum Company.

Clues, 799 Broadway, New York, is a new magazine of the Clayton Publishing Company, Harold W. Hersey, editor, to be devoted to detective and mystery fiction. It will use short-stories from 1500 to 6000 words in length, no serials. Payment is at from 1 to 2 cents a word.

The Northern Light, Holt, Minn., is announced by B. C. Hagglund, editor, as a forthcoming magazine designed to help beginning poets. No remuneration will be made for material.

The Eagle Magazine, South Bend, Ind., writes a contributor that it has purchased all the material that will be needed for many months.

Snappy Stories, 627 W. Forty-third Street, New York, is reported by contributors to be slow in paying for material.

Beautiful America, 220 W. Forty-second Street, New York, has suspended publication.

Best Stories, reprint monthly of the Clever Truths Publishing Co., Sam Bierman, editor, now has its editorial office at 1440 Broadway, New York. It is published at 2242 Grove Street, Chicago.

Laughs and Chuckles, Wilmington, Del., is reported to be much overstocked.

American Garage and Auto Dealer, 775 Main Street, Buffalo, N. Y., an illustrated monthly trade journal "devoted to better management of garages, repair shops, service stations and automobile sales organizations in the smaller towns," published by Corson Publications, Inc., W. O. Bernhardt, editor, uses helpful trade articles in its field. For "The Trouble Shooter" department it pays \$1 for acceptable signed hints dealing with motor troubles—puzzles that took hours to find and minutes to fix, briefly described and solved.

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Queries and Comments

THE MANUSCRIPT READER'S VIEW

THE following letter from Donald C. Peattie contains much that is illuminating, writing as he does from the standpoint both of an author and a publisher's reader. We think, however, that the practice of sending personal letters of comment on submitted manuscripts is more general among editors than his letter would indicate. The beginning writer, whose work still comes wide of the mark, receives comparatively few suggestions from the editors, but as soon as his work shows definite promise, helpful letters are likely to become more and more the rule. Most writers of our acquaintance who are selling a fair volume of their output receive personal letters more frequently than rejection slips, at least from editors who have bought some of their work. This applies not infrequently to manuscripts submitted through THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S agency department, as well as to those personally submitted. It is remarkable, in view of the volume of material submitted, that editors find time to write as many personal letters as they do. The exceptional editors Mr. Peattie has found probably are those to whom his work appeals. Another writer with a different slant would get "rises" from another set of editors.

Editor, The Author & Journalist.

I have just read a most interesting article in your June issue called "The Author's Agent." There was much in it that I admired, but there are some statements in it that seem to me fallacious; at least they are not always true, and they might easily lead inexperienced writers astray.

Mr. Bittner says: "The outstanding argument against them (the literary agencies), the main opportunity lost by the writer when he markets through an agency, is that direct personal contact between editor and writer which can be invaluable to both of them." Mr. Bittner then enlarges upon this theme.

If Mr. Bittner himself sits down and writes a paternal letter to his unsuccessful or partially successful contributors, telling them just where the story falls down, what the requirements of his magazine are, and what he does not want, and establishes "that direct personal contact between editor and writer," then he is one editor in a hundred. Assuming that he goes to all these pains, he still should not judge other editors by himself; few indeed live up to his high tenets. Inexperienced writers will encounter disappointment if they expect as much.

I have seen the thing from inside and out. I am a writer myself, if only a beginner; and three members of my family are writers, one for a long life of literary production. I have read hundreds of rejection slips and letters, and a great many acceptances, enclosing gratifying checks. But it is only most rarely that an editor says: "We like your story, but we never take material dealing with politics," or "If you will make your hero live instead of having him die on the last page, we'll take the story," or, in accepting a story does an editor give you any clue why he did so. He doesn't say "We liked this story because the heroine had so much courage; our women readers eat that sort of thing up." At best he says: "Your story is great. Enclosed please find our check," or something of that sort. Recently I sold an article to an editor who wrote back enthusiastically. I sent him another on almost the same subject, but it was "out of his line."

So much for seeing the thing from the outside. But having acted as a publisher's reader, let me show how it worked within the walls of a big book publishing house in New York. In that house, at least, we readers were instructed that the fact that a story was sent through a literary agency boded nothing for good or ill; we could ignore the fact and read the story on its merits. When the readers had all sent in their reports and had all agreed that the plot was exciting but the style old-fashioned, the editor sent back the manuscript with thanks for the honor of examining it. Did he say, "Madam, you have a rattling good plot, but you think people still write with the technique of Charles Dickens; wake up, and we'll examine your manuscript again?" He did not. He hadn't time; he hadn't inclination. The market is swamped with good books, fair books, poor books. He spends the three hours a day that he might take to write such letters, at lunch with Irvin S. Cobb and Ring Lardner, smoking cigars and cracking jokes. Irvin and Ring could write anything and the public would buy it and laugh. They sell. I am not blaming the editors. They have no time to run a correspondence school for aspiring young writers.

I ought to make an exception in the case of certain editors, and I would name them if it would not appear like advertising. Some have been at pains to tell me what they wanted, and how they wanted my articles changed. But my position is a little easier; I write informative articles, not short stories. It is easy for an editor to tell me, if he wants to, why he does or doesn't like an

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UNFINISHED PLOT

(By Dr. Burton). A girl sat at her window, looking sadly onto the street. Her young, dear brother had confessed the winning of a large sum at cards the night before. They needed the money to care for an invalid mother. Yet gambling was her abhorrence. Her eyes fell on a figure in the street, her lover! Why was he coming so early? A moment later, a ring; she admitted him. They talked: "I had to come, first thing this morning. Your brother—"

"You know?"
"Yes—he won the money from me."
"You dared?"
"You needed the money, wouldn't take it from me."

(Finish with the girl's reply, and denouement.)

PRIZES: It will be easy for you to finish this plot. Try it. 1st Prize—\$25.00, 2nd—\$10.00, 3rd—\$5.00. Send only one solution, not over 100 words. Don't copy plot. Write name, age (18 or over), and address plainly. Contest closes November 10th. No plots returned. A few minutes' use of your imagination may win you the \$25.00 cash prize. Anyway it's good practice. Try. Show this plot to your friends. Write for booklet "Short Story Writing," special rate and Profit Sharing Plan.

LA R J EXTENSION INSTITUTE, 376 Laird Bldg., Minneapolis

article about liquid air. It takes a wonderful mind to teach how to write fiction. It takes a wonderful mind to write it, and it would be my advice that unless you think your mind is indeed wonderful, you stay away from the fascination and danger of short-stories.

In closing, I would like to point out what seems to me the possible danger in a sentence that occurs in your magazine almost every month—"Study the market." The market is indeed a good thing to study. But because an editor printed a story about gun-running and Mexican revolutionaries last month does not mean that he wants another story of that kind, even better written, this month. He is more likely to say, "We've run enough of that for a while." Another way of studying the market, as your contributors often assert, is to write a story with a particular magazine in mind. This is certainly a good plan if you have already got the entre there.

It is my experience that the only satisfactory personal contact with the editor is in the nature of an actual meeting, of a social-business relationship. The editor may use the same words in speaking to you that he would write in a long letter; but his voice and his face speak unsaid volumes. The very smell of his office, the books on the shelf behind him, the way he files his manuscripts, the speed of the typewriters in the next room, convey the whole temper of the magazine, its policies, its predilections and its prejudices.

DONALD C. PEATTIE,

THE SERVICE BUREAU FOR WRITERS

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Plotting the Short Story (Chunn) 1.00
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Some writers succeed in selling a few of their stories but find that the larger per cent. of their work is rejected. Generally this is due to a haphazard knowledge of technique and of market requirements. The S. T. C. can quickly help this type of writer. S. T. C. technical instruction is simplified and practical. The criticisms are professional and concerned mainly with the practical features of writing.

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Writers sometimes find that though their work is salable they can't write enough stories to make a satisfactory income from their writing. Often this is due to lack of confidence, based upon small experience in writing. The S. T. C. helps this type of writer by making him fully conscious of his strength and by giving him the encouragement and material wherewith to attain a satisfactory success. During the period of the training the student develops fifty original plots and seven complete short-stories. This gives him a large reserve fund upon which to build salable material. Also, more than ten methods of devising plots are fully studied, enabling the student to plumb his creative forces from many angles.

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Some writers are not content with merely selling their work; they are ambitious to reach the more discriminating publications. This means that a full expression of personality, style, thought, is necessary. The S. T. C. has unique help for these writers. Whether or not the student has had any previous training, he may secure the S. T. C.'s personal training in writing the literary story by communicating with the Registrar and by submitting a story satisfactorily passed upon by the Director of the S. T. C.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST,

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Please send me, without obligation on my part, your free booklet, "The Way Past the Editor," and full information about the Simplified Training Course in Short-Story Writing.



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